

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### INTRODUCING THE MEDICARE VISION REHABILITATION COVERAGE ACT OF 1999

**HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 17, 1999*

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, September 15, 1999, I filed the Medicare Vision Rehabilitation Coverage Act of 1999 which would reimburse, under Medicare Part B, vision rehabilitation professionals for services provided. September 15 is also National Vision Rehabilitation Day, established to raise awareness of the services available to those suffering from visual impairment. Currently 6.6 million Americans over the age of 65 report some level of vision impairment.

My own mother, who suffers from vision impairment, benefited tremendously from the rehabilitation services provided by the Greater Boston Aid to the Blind. The training and therapy she received helped her to avoid the injuries and loss of independence that often accompany vision impairment. Unfortunately, Medicare does not currently cover programs like this and not all seniors can afford the services on their own. This legislation is designed to ensure that this situation is not repeated.

Statistics provided by the American Council of the Blind project that by 2005, 1 out of every 6 Massachusetts residents over the age of 60 will either suffer from blindness or from partial impairment. Vision rehabilitation services teach seniors who suffer from permanent vision impairment how to continue living independently with this loss. Examples of services covered include independent living skills and training in safe methods of travel.

Medicare beneficiaries who are blind or whose vision difficulties cannot be addressed by surgery, medication or corrective lenses could be eligible for services provided by certified vision rehabilitation professionals under the legislation.

According to the National Vision Rehabilitation Cooperative, age-related visual impairment is second only to arthritis/rheumatism as a cause of disability. However, due to a lack of awareness about the services available as well as a lack of funding, only 2% of the visually impaired have benefited from vision rehabilitation services.

Visual impairment is one of four major conditions contributing to a senior's loss of independence. The nonprofit Alliance for Aging Research has determined based on data from the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey that a loss of independence by older adults costs the United States an additional \$26 billion a year.

The type of vision rehabilitation covered under this legislation could save the Medicare program millions of dollars in costs associated

with injuries such as broken bones which are often caused by vision impairment. A person suffering from an injury such as a hip fracture is eligible for reimbursable therapeutic services. Why shouldn't a person who suffers from irreversible vision loss be afforded the same type of therapeutic services under Medicare?

Loss of vision can be a devastating disability for seniors, who value independence foremost. Wonderful new therapies like vision rehabilitation not only save money, but more importantly give people back their quality of life.

### TRIBUTE TO HARVEY CURLEY

**HON. SANDER M. LEVIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 17, 1999*

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mayor Harvey Curley of the City of Eastpointe, Michigan, who will retire in November 1999 after a distinguished career serving his community over the last twenty-five years.

Beginning in 1975, Harvey Curley was elected to the East Detroit Board of Education, serving as its President from 1978–1983. He also served two years on the Zoning Board of Appeals and as Councilman from 1985 to 1987. He has stood at the helm of elected city government since 1987 when he began his three terms as Mayor.

During Harvey Curley's tenure as Mayor, he was responsible for the re-development of the southwest corner of Gratiot and Nine Mile, transforming that area into a thriving commercial strip. In addition, many Municipal Facility Construction Projects were developed under his leadership: the New Parks Garage at Public Works Complex, the New Municipal Court Building, and the New Community Center.

Harvey Curley approached his public service with pride in his community, devotion to its continued improvement, enthusiasm, patience and a tireless commitment to projects small or large. It was always a pleasure to work alongside him on issues important to Eastpointe and the State of Michigan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mayor Harvey Curley for all that he has done to make Eastpointe a better place to live and work, and to send him every good wish for good health and happiness in the future.

### MOUNT LEBANON BAPTIST CHURCH CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 17, 1999*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, in November 1899, The Reverend Theodore Williams, a re-

cent graduate of the School of Theology at Howard University was inspired by God to establish a mission which was named High Street Baptist Church. The mission worshiped in an old jail, a former detention center for runaway slaves, on High Street, now Wisconsin Avenue, NW, in Georgetown. Later, the church held worship services at the Seventh Street Baptist Church—which is now named Jerusalem.

Mr. Speaker, on July 22, 1901, a recognition council was called, and High Street Baptist, which now had thirty-four members, was recognized as a regular Baptist Church. The congregation continued to grow, and in November 1904 purchased and relocated to a new site at 814 25th Street, NW, and was renamed Mount Lebanon Baptist Church. An all-day service was held on Sunday, November 19, 1908, in thanksgiving for the completion of the work of renovating this property. Six years later (1914), the congregation demolished that building and constructed a new building, to the glory of God, on the same site. The mortgage for the new building was burned in 1919. In April 1923, after 24 years of inspired and zealous leadership and service as pastor, Reverend Williams was called to his reward. He was succeeded by the Reverend John Ford, who served as pastor from 1924 until 1932 when he left to accept a new charge.

In November 1932, the Reverend Edgar Newton was installed as pastor. His motto was "Follow me as I follow Christ." Much was accomplished during his leadership of almost thirty-nine years. New clubs (ministries) and a building fund were established, significant growth in membership was accomplished, two properties adjacent to the church were purchased, services to members and the community were expanded, and the site of the present church was purchased. In addition, three mortgages were burned—two at the 25th Street site and one at the present site, 1219 New Jersey Avenue, NW, to which the congregation relocated on January 27, 1963. Reverend Newton retired in June 1971; and on June 18, 1974, he was called from service to reward.

The Reverend Vernon C. Brown, a son of the church, succeeded Reverend Newton to the pastorate on November 12, 1972, and served faithfully until his retirement on December 31, 1991. Under his leadership, programs of services to members and the community were expanded, including services to senior citizens and a "feed the hungry" program providing balanced hot meals at least once per week. His motto was "The family that prays together stays together."

From the time of Reverend Brown's retirement until November 1992, pastoral duties were shared by three sons of the church, the Reverend Norman King, the Reverend Benjamin C. Sands, and the Reverend William O. Wilson.

In November 1992, the Reverend H. Lionel Edmonds became the fifth pastor of the

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